



MATTHEW RITTER
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 29, 2019

The Honorable William Tong
Attorney General State of Connecticut
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Attorney General Tong,

Pursuant to § 3-125 of the Connecticut General Statutes, I am writing to request a formal legal opinion regarding the constitutionality of eliminating the religious exemption for required immunizations. Currently, state law provides:

Each local or regional board of education, or similar body governing a nonpublic school or schools, shall require each child to be protected by adequate immunization...before being permitted to enroll in any program operated by a public or nonpublic school under its jurisdiction...Any such child who...(3)presents a statement from the parents or guardian of such child that such immunization would be contrary to the religious beliefs of such child or the parents or guardian of such child...shall be exempt from the appropriate provisions of this section.

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-204a(a) (2019).

As you may know, three states — California, Mississippi and West Virginia — currently do not have a religious or philosophical exemption for required school immunizations. In addition, the lack of either exemption has been challenged and upheld under federal constitutional principles.

I am asking your office for a formal opinion addressing any state or federal statutory or constitutional impediments to eliminating the religious exemption for immunizations prior to being allowed to enroll in public or private schools.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Matt Ritter
House Majority Leader